

What is the Forum on Transportation Investment and what is its role?

The Forum was formed as the natural follow-up to the state's 30-year survey and report "Idaho's Transportation Future: getting there together" (completed in 2003).

1. First step, completed in 2003, gave a view of what Idahoans wanted and need from their transportation system 30 years from now.
2. Forum charged with learning how best to make that vision a reality.
3. Sought consensus of members on issues.

The Forum consists of 57 members who met eight times over 17 months.

1. Members represent every facet of transportation in Idaho.
2. Experts provided members with information needed to reach conclusions
3. Board identified two main purposes for the Forum's work:
 - Understand the needs and demands for improvements and the available funding options.
 - Make recommendations on how to shape future investment in the Idaho surface transportation system.

The Forum focused its investigation on three core areas.

1. Review current financing/funding options.
2. Understand the demand for improving Idaho's transportation system and summarize projected needs.
3. Assess future innovative financing and revenue options.

What did the Forum on Transportation Investment conclude about Idaho's transportation system?

Idaho faces tremendous growth.

1. Idaho third-fastest growing state in the U.S. Population expected to grow by 56 percent between 2000 and 2030, twice the national rate.
2. Since 1978, Idaho's growth included:
 - Population grew 51%.
 - Annual vehicle miles traveled up 104%.
 - 93% more cars registered.
3. Growth strains all levels of government. Almost 300 government jurisdictions have some role in state's transportation network
4. Idaho's local road system increasing by 300 miles per year (cities, counties, and highway districts).

Transportation infrastructure is crucial to Idaho's economy.

1. Much of state's growing economy directly dependent on some form of transportation.
2. Freight movement is the thread that sews our economy together. Growth expected to double in next 20 years.
3. Citizen interest in public transportation growing, but
 - Idaho one of six states without dedicated state revenue stream to support transit projects.
 - Local revenue authority limited or nonexistent.

Idaho faces a funding shortfall for surface transportation.

1. Backlog of \$8.65 billion from 1994-2000 with available revenue at the same time less than half of that.
2. Federal funding increases getting smaller.
3. Idaho's transportation needs in next 30 years exceed \$20 billion.
4. Current revenue falls more than \$200 million per year short.
5. GARVEE bonding is only a tool, not a funding solution. It accelerates some construction, but does not address funding shortfalls.
6. Solutions require innovative revenue sources.

The Forum on Transportation Investment identified potential solutions to meet the growing demand on Idaho's transportation system

Partnerships should be formed between all levels of government and the private sector to reach common goals.

1. Integrate land use and transportation planning at all levels.
2. Provide opportunities for user-fee based systems.
 - Toll roads/high occupancy toll lanes.
 - Congestion pricing.
3. Promote partnership opportunities (private/public, public/public).
4. Pursue future revenue opportunities by transitioning from traditional sources (fuel tax) to other methodologies.
 - BTU tax.
 - VMT tax.
5. Update the analytic Idaho Highway Needs Assessment Study approx. every 10 years.

Policy changes can be used to improve Idaho's transportation revenue.

1. Public transportation should be integral part of Idaho's transportation system by dedicating revenue mechanisms.
2. Improve freight mobility by encouraging truck/rail/port/air infrastructure investments and efficiencies.
3. Provide Local Option Taxing authority for transportation-related initiatives.
4. Establish Index strategies for:
 - fuel taxes,
 - vehicle registrations,
 - other transportation related options.
5. Create a rental car fee to generate revenue for transportation initiatives.
6. Assess Impact Fees on new growth/development to ensure that adequate transportation facilities are available.
7. Address legal barriers as applicable.

Idaho's transportation revenue must be increased to keep up with growing demand on its transportation system.

1. Idaho's gas tax was last increased 10 years ago. However demand has been explosive.
2. Growing gap between revenue and demand must be addressed; ignoring the problem will only make it more difficult to solve.
3. Increase fuel tax and vehicle registration fees:
 - Federal funding increasing at a lesser rate than the demand on Idaho's transportation system.
 - Fuel efficient and hybrid vehicles will continue to reduce Idaho's revenue.
 - Idaho cannot depend on solutions on the federal level.
4. Increase motor vehicle-imposed fees to cover the cost of providing the services.
5. Consider alternative fuels' impact.